



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of:

JOHN A. HAGAN

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Filed: July 18, 2000

For: CONTAINER

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Group Art Unit: 3727

Examiner: S. Castellano

APPEAL BRIEF

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Sir:

This is an appeal brief from the final rejection of claims 1-9, 12-16, and 18-32 of the Office Action dated November 3, 2003. This application was filed on July 18, 2000.

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Rehrig Pacific Company, a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the state of Delaware, and having a place of business at 4010 East 26th Street, Los Angeles, California 90023 as set forth in the assignment recorded in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on December 26, 2000 at Reel 011397, Frame 0387.

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II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no appeals or interferences known to Appellant, Appellant's legal representative, or the assignee which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-9, 12-16, and 18-49 are pending in this application, where claims 33-49 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-9, 12-16, and 18-32 (*see* Appendix, attached) have been rejected and are the subject of this appeal.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

An amendment after final rejection was not filed.

V. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Various containers are used for transporting produce from the fields where they are grown to the markets where they are purchased. Such containers are often constructed of cardboard since this material is disposable, lightweight, and inexpensive. Unfortunately, cardboard containers tend to degrade when in contact with moisture and lack structural strength and durability. Plastic containers, on the other hand, are also lightweight and inexpensive, are able to withstand a range of environmental conditions, provide structural strength even when designed for proper ventilation, and are reusable. Although plastic containers offer many advantages over conventional cardboard containers, the disposability of cardboard is sometimes preferred if dirt and other foreign matter is encountered during the harvesting, shipping, or handling processes.

The claimed invention advantageously provides a container with the strength, durability, and reusability associated with a plastic container which is arranged to receive an inner receptacle with the disposability associated with a cardboard container.

According to a first embodiment of the present invention, a container (10) is provided which is adapted to receive an inner receptacle. The container includes a base (12) for supporting a lower portion of the inner receptacle, where the base (12) includes a peripheral frame portion (30) defining at least one relatively large opening (32) therebetween. A first pair of opposed walls (14, 16) is pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion (30) and movable between an assembled position and an inwardly collapsed position. A second pair of opposed walls (18, 20) is pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion (30) and movable between an assembled position and an inwardly collapsed position, where each of the second pair of opposed walls (18, 20) is releasably attached to an adjacent one of the first pair of opposed walls (14, 16). The assembled first and second pairs of opposed walls (14, 16, 18, 20) and the base (12) define a compartment area (22) which is arranged to removably receive the inner receptacle therein. According to one aspect of this embodiment, each of the first pair of opposed walls (14, 16) can include a flange (76) depending inwardly therefrom, where each of the second pair of opposed walls (18, 20) is releasably attached to the flange (76) of an adjacent one of the first pair of opposed walls (14, 16) in the assembled position (*see*, for example, p. 8, line 14 - p. 13, line 14; FIGS. 1-14).

According to a second embodiment of the present invention, a container (110) adapted to receive an inner receptacle is provided. The container includes a base (112) having a peripheral frame portion (130), and a base member adapted to be received on the peripheral frame portion (130) for supporting a lower portion of the inner receptacle. The base member includes an exterior ring (197) and a lightweight support material (198) affixed thereacross. A first pair of opposed walls (114, 116) extends upwardly from the peripheral frame portion (130), and a second pair of opposed walls (118, 120) extends upwardly from the peripheral frame portion (130) and is attached to the first pair of opposed walls (114, 116). The first and second pairs of opposed walls (114, 116, 118, 120) and the base (112) define a compartment area (122) for receiving the inner receptacle therein (*see*, for example, p. 15, lines 9-27; FIGS. 15-20).

According to a third embodiment of the present invention, a container (210) is provided which is adapted to receive an inner receptacle arranged to hold merchandise therein. The container (210) includes a base (212) including a peripheral frame portion (230), and a first pair of opposed walls (214, 216) integrally formed with and extending upwardly from the peripheral frame portion (230). In addition, a second pair of opposed walls (218, 220) is integrally formed with and extends upwardly from the peripheral frame portion (230) and is integrally formed with the first pair of opposed walls (214, 216), where the first and second pairs of opposed walls (214, 216, 218, 220) and the base (212) define a compartment area (222) for removably receiving and supporting the inner receptacle therein (*see*, for example, p. 15, line 28 - p. 16, line 20; FIGS. 21-24).

VI. ISSUES

1. Whether claims 14-16 and 18-23 are unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 2,395,542 issued to Fordon ("Fordon") under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).
2. Whether claim 14 is unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,973,692 issued to Cloyd ("Cloyd") under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).
3. Whether claims 1-9, 12-13, and 24-32 are unpatentable over Fordon in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,015,056 issued to Overholt ("Overholt") under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).
4. Whether claim 15 is unpatentable over Cloyd in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,796,342 issued to Sanders ("Sanders") under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).
5. Whether claim 16 is unpatentable over Cloyd in view of Sanders and further in view of Fordon under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

VII. GROUPING OF CLAIMS

For purposes of this appeal only and based upon the underlying rejections being appealed, Appellant groups the claims as follows:

1. For the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection over Fordon, claims 14-16 and 18-23 do not stand or fall together.

Group A: Claims 14-16 are directed to a container where the first and second pairs of opposed walls are integrally formed with each other (third embodiment) and therefore stand or fall together, but do not stand or fall with Group B.

Group B: Claims 18-23 are directed to a container having a base member including an exterior ring having a lightweight support material affixed thereacross (second embodiment) and therefore stand or fall together, but do not stand or fall with Group A.

2. For the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection over Cloyd, claim 14 stands or falls alone.

3. For the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection over Fordon in view of Overholt, claims 1-9, 12-13, and 24-32 do not stand or fall together.

Group C: Claims 1-9 and 12-13 are directed to a collapsible container (first embodiment) and therefore stand or fall together.

Group D: Claims 24-32 are directed to a collapsible container (first embodiment) where the first pair of opposed walls include a flange depending inwardly therefrom and therefore stand or fall together, but do not stand or fall with Group C.

4. For the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Cloyd in view of Sanders, claim 15 stands or falls alone.

5. For the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Cloyd in view of Sanders and Fordon, claim 16 stands or falls alone.

VIII. ARGUMENT

A. **Rejection of Claims 14-16 and 18-23 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Over Fordon**

Appellant respectfully traverses the Examiner's position that the second (Group B: claims 18-23) and third (Group A: claims 14-16) embodiments of Appellants' claimed invention are anticipated by Fordon for the reasons stated below.

In independent claim 14 (Group A), Appellant recites "a base including a peripheral frame portion," "a first pair of opposed walls *integrally formed with* and extending upwardly from the peripheral frame portion," and "a second pair of opposed walls *integrally formed with* and extending upwardly from the peripheral frame portion and *integrally formed with* the first pair of opposed walls" (*emphasis added*). As such, Appellant has defined a container where a base and first and second pairs of opposed walls are *all integrally formed together* to define a compartment area for removably receiving and supporting an inner receptacle therein.

With reference to claim 14, the Examiner states:

For this applicant the clear anticipation will have to be explained. Re claim 14, since all of the components of the container of Fordon are connected to each other either directly or indirectly through other connected components, the second pair of walls (either the walls made of wire or the walls made of solid fiberboard panels) are integrally formed with and extend upwardly from the peripheral frame portion (vertical flanges 2) and integrally formed with the first pair of opposed walls (either the walls made of wire or the wall made of solid fiberboard panels).

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Appellant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's characterization of Fordon, and asserts that Fordon does not disclose or suggest first and second pairs of opposed walls which are integrally formed with each other as in Appellant's claimed invention. In direct contrast, Fordon discloses side frames 9, 13 having corner uprights 11, 14 on which straps 22 are provided, where straps 22 are used to connect frames 9 to frames 13 so that frames 9, 13 are *outwardly rotatable* (see Fordon, col. 2, lines 21-30 and 47-55; FIG. 2). As such, Fordon's frames 9 and 13 are clearly not integrally formed with each other as claimed by Appellant.

As reproduced above, the Examiner incorrectly argues that "since all of the components of the container of Fordon are connected to each other either directly or indirectly through other connected components, the second pair of walls ... are integrally formed with ... the peripheral frame portion ... and integrally formed with the first pair of opposed walls." Fordon's frames 9, 13 are shown and described to be *outwardly movable* and, as such, cannot be "integrally formed." In the specification (and as is known in the art), Appellant makes a definite distinction between the alternatives of the third embodiment of the present invention wherein the first and second pairs of opposed walls are *integrally formed* with each other and thus not inwardly and/or outwardly movable (see p. 15, line 28 - p. 16, line 20; FIGS. 21-24) and the first embodiment of the present invention wherein the first and second pairs of opposed walls are *inwardly and/or outwardly movable* in order to provide a collapsible container (see p. 8, line 14 - p. 13, line 14; FIGS. 1-14).

For all of the foregoing reasons, claim 14 (Group A), along with its corresponding dependent claims, are patentably distinguishable over Fordon. Because the claims of Group A recite a container where the first and second pairs of opposed walls are integrally formed with each other, which is not recited by the claims of Group B and which is not shown in the prior art, the claims of Group A are patentable independently of the claims of Group B.

Turning now to independent claim 18 (Group B), Appellant recites “a base including a peripheral frame portion” and “a base member adapted to be received on the peripheral frame portion for supporting a lower portion of the inner receptacle, the base member including an exterior ring and a lightweight support material affixed thereacross.” Accordingly, the peripheral frame portion is part of the base. The base member, comprising an exterior ring and lightweight support material affixed thereacross, is a separate component which is arranged to be received on the peripheral frame portion of the base.

With reference to Fordon, the Examiner states:

Re claim 18, the base includes side bottom bars (5) and intermediate longitudinal bar (7), the base member includes an exterior ring (frame 1) and a lightweight support material (bottom panel 30) affixed thereacross, the base member is received on the peripheral frame portion for supporting a lower portion of the inner receptacle.

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Appellant disagrees. The Examiner is improperly attempting to define two separate elements of Appellant's claimed container with the same component of Fordon's container. Specifically, Fordon discloses a bottom frame 1 which includes vertical flanges 2 and horizontal flanges 4 (see Fordon, col. 2, lines 5-30; FIG. 2). Side bottom bars 5 (see Fordon, FIG. 4) are secured to the underside of flanges 4 (side members) of bottom frame 1, and intermediate longitudinal bar 7 is secured to the underside of flanges 4 (end members) of bottom frame 1. Metal cross piece 8 extends between the side members of bottom frame 1, being secured to the upper side of bottom frame 1 and resting on the intermediate longitudinal bar 7. Consequently, Fordon has defined bottom frame 1 to include vertical flanges 2 and horizontal flanges 4 (side and end members), and described that side bottom bars 5 and longitudinal bar 7 are affixed to the underside of bottom frame 1. Fordon further describes that side frames 9 and end frames 13 are each welded to vertical flanges 2 of bottom frame 1.

The Examiner asserts that Fordon's side bottom bars 5 and intermediate longitudinal bar 7 represent the "base", and that bottom frame 1 comprises a separate "base member" component. In particular, the Examiner states that bottom frame 1 comprises the "exterior ring" of the base member and that bottom panel 30 comprises the "lightweight support material" affixed thereacross. The Examiner further states that "the base member is received on the peripheral frame portion," but the Examiner does not indicate what part of Fordon's container is deemed to comprise the peripheral frame portion.

The Examiner's characterization of Fordon is incorrect. If side bottom bars 5 and longitudinal bar 7 are to comprise the "base," then where is the peripheral frame portion? Side bottom bars 5 and longitudinal bar 7 each run parallel to each other and are not joined together, and certainly cannot be considered to form any type of peripheral frame. The only components of Fordon's container that could constitute a peripheral frame portion are horizontal flanges 4 of bottom frame 1, but the Examiner has instead asserted that bottom frame 1 and its horizontal flanges 4 are the exterior ring portion of the base member which is received on a peripheral frame portion of the base. Furthermore, Fordon discloses that frames 9, 13 are welded to vertical flanges 2 which, by the Examiner's interpretation, would mean that frames 9, 13 are integrally formed with the base member, not with peripheral frame portion as in Appellant's claimed invention.

Still further, the Examiner attempts to equate Fordon's bottom panel 30 to Appellant's lightweight support material and asserts that bottom panel 30 is affixed across bottom frame 1. Appellant respectfully disagrees, but even if bottom frame 1 could be construed to be an "exterior ring" as claimed by Appellant, bottom panel 30 is not affixed across bottom frame 1 as in Appellant's invention, but rather all of Fordon's panels "may be quickly inserted or removed as occasion may require" (*see* Fordon, col. 3, lines 32-43).

For all of these reasons, claim 18 (Group B) along with corresponding dependent claims 19-23 are believed to be patentably distinguishable over Fordon. Because the claims of Group B recite a container having a base member including an exterior ring having a lightweight support material affixed thereacross, which is not recited by the claims of Group A and which is not shown in the prior art, the claims of Group B are patentable independently of the claims of Group A.

**B. Rejection of Claim 14
Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Over Cloyd**

Appellant respectfully traverses the Examiner's position that the third embodiment (claim 14) of Appellant's claimed invention is anticipated by Cloyd for the reasons explained below.

As stated above in *Section A*, claim 14 recites "a base including a peripheral frame portion," "a first pair of opposed walls integrally formed with and extending upwardly from the peripheral frame portion," and "a second pair of opposed walls integrally formed with and extending upwardly from the peripheral frame portion and *integrally formed with* the first pair of opposed walls" (*emphasis added*).

The Examiner states:

Cloyd is adapted to receive an inner receptacle of a smaller size. For this applicant, the rejection will have to be further explained although it is clear. Cloyd discloses a base (bottom panel 1) including a peripheral frame portion (one or two adjacent of the peripheral ribs 8, as shown in Fig. 2, 3, 4 and 10). The hinge connection of the walls 2, 3, 4 and 5 to base 1 is believed to represent an integrally formed connection between the first pair of opposed walls and the peripheral frame portion and the second pair of opposed walls and the peripheral frame as claimed.

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The Examiner's characterization of Cloyd is incorrect. Cloyd may disclose a first pair of opposed walls 2, 3 integrally formed with the base 1 and a second pair of opposed walls 4, 5 integrally formed with the base 1, but fails to disclose or suggest "a second pair of opposed walls ... integrally formed with the first pair of opposed walls" as claimed by Appellant.

Cloyd states that "[t]he blank for the FIGS. 1-15 box is molded flat as shown in FIG. 1," where the remaining "FIGS. 16 through 20 show modifications of the fasteners for holding the sides and the ends of the box together ... to make the box easier to disassemble" (see Cloyd, col. 1, lines 6-18 and 52-54; col. 4, lines 48-51). Cloyd does not disclose or suggest that walls 2, 3 could be integrally formed with walls 4, 5, instead describing a collapsible container where walls 2, 3, 4, 5 are outwardly movable, the box being "erected by folding or swinging the panels into position and connecting adjacent panels by fasteners" where "[t]he fasteners are easily released to permit return of the box to the flat state" (see Cloyd, col. 1, lines 6-18). As explained above with reference to the rejection of claim 14 over Fordon, this embodiment of the present invention where the first and second pairs of opposed walls are *integrally formed* with each other, and thus not movable, is distinct from a collapsible container such as Cloyd's where the first and second pairs of opposed walls are inwardly and/or outwardly movable. For these reasons, claim 14 is patentably distinguishable over Cloyd.

C. Rejection of Claims 1-9, 12-13, and 24-32
Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Over Fordon and Overholt

Appellant respectfully traverses the Examiner's position that it would be obvious to combine the teachings of Fordon and Overholt in order to provide the first embodiment (Group C: claims 1-9 and 12-13; Group D: claims 24-32) of the present invention. Appellant further maintains that even if such a combination could be made, the claimed invention is not provided, for the reasons set forth below.

The Examiner states:

Fordon discloses the invention except for the inward collapsibility of the two pairs of opposed walls and the releasable attachment of each of the side walls of one pair of opposed walls to the pair of end walls. Overholt teaches a collapsible container having two pairs of opposed walls and the releasable attachment of each of the side walls of one pair of opposed walls to the pair of end walls. It would have been obvious to improve the Fordon container by adding the collapsibility taught by Overholt, motivated by the compact storage achieved thereby.

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Appellant respectfully submits that the above-stated rejection is in error, and asserts that there is no motivation or suggestion to combine Fordon with Overholt. Not only is the Examiner's characterization of the cited references submitted to be incorrect, but the cited references teach away from Appellant's invention. Furthermore, none of the cited references recognize the problem solved by Appellant's claimed invention.

**1. There Is No Motivation Or Suggestion
To Combine The Cited References**

In independent claim 1 (Group C), Appellant recites "a first pair of opposed walls pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion and movable between an assembled position and an inwardly collapsed position" and "a second pair of opposed walls pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion and movable between an assembled position and an inwardly collapsed position, each of the second pair of opposed walls releasably attached to an adjacent one of the first pair of opposed walls." The Examiner admits that Fordon fails to disclose the inward collapsibility of frames 9, 13 and the releasable attachment of frames 9, 13 to each other. The Examiner incorrectly asserts that Fordon combined with Overholt achieves Appellant's claimed invention.

There is no motivation or suggestion to combine Fordon and Overholt to achieve Appellant's claimed invention. One of the objects of Fordon's invention is "to provide a structure ... in which the walls automatically swing to [an] outwardly inclined nesting position" (*see* Fordon, col. 1, lines 8-13; FIG. 2). To accomplish this objection, Fordon's container utilizes that loop-like straps 22 that join corner uprights 14 of end frames 13 with corner uprights 11 of side frames 9, "acting to limit the outward spring or swing of the walls when in [the] nesting position, as shown in Fig. 2" (*see* Fordon, col. 2, lines 47-51; FIG. 2). Nesting of Fordon's containers is depicted in FIG. 6, where an outwardly inclined position of frames 9, 13 as restricted by straps 22 is required to allow an upper container to be securely received in a lower container in a nesting configuration. If straps 22 were to be replaced by a releasable attachment as suggested by the Examiner, then upon release frames 9, 13 would have no limit to their outward swing, instead falling into a flat configuration such that nesting of Fordon's containers would no longer be possible.

To this point, the Examiner states:

Re the obviousness rejection of Fordon in view of Overholt, the examiner has conceded the Fordon, by itself, doesn't disclose a collapsible container or the releasable attachment of the opposed walls. However, Overholt is relied upon for these teachings. The straps limit outward swing for providing nesting and applicant directs attention to the elimination of the straps. The claims do not require straps or nesting. Therefore, the straps and nesting function could be eliminated in favor of a releasable attachment which selectively allows the walls to remain upright when the container holds items and is stacked and allows the walls to be stored in a compact, collapsed position when the container is empty and being stored or transported.

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It is immaterial whether Appellant's claims require straps or nesting. In order for the combination of Fordon and Overholt to be proper, there must be some motivation or

suggestion to combine these two references to achieve Appellant's claimed invention. However, as described above, Fordon's container would cease to function in its intended manner were straps 22 removed to satisfy the Examiner's proposed combination. Since the intended function of Fordon would be destroyed by the Examiner's combination with Overholt, clearly there cannot be any motivation or suggestion to combine these references.

Turning now to independent claim 24 (Group D), Appellant recites "a first pair of opposed walls pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion and movable between an assembled position and an inwardly collapsed position, each of the first pair of opposed walls having a flange depending inwardly therefrom" and "a second pair of opposed walls pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion and movable between an assembled position and an inwardly collapsed position, each of the second pair of opposed walls releasably attached to the flange of an adjacent one of the first pair of opposed walls." There is no motivation or suggestion to combine Fordon and Overholt for the reasons explained above with reference to claim 1. Just as with removal of straps 22, the use of a flange would provide a releasable connection between the side frames 9 and end frames 13 with no capability to limit the outward swing of frames 9, 13 for nesting purposes. In addition, the intended nesting function of Fordon's containers would be further destroyed by the use of flanges on end frames 13, as the inwardly depending flanges would protrude into the container and prevent the end frames 13 of the upper container from abutting the end frames 13 of the lower container (*see* Fordon, FIG. 6), thus severely limiting the ability to nest Fordon's containers in any type of compact manner.

**2. The Cited References Teach Away
From The Claimed Invention**

As explained above, Fordon neither discloses nor suggests walls which are movable to an inwardly collapsed position, nor walls which are releasably attached to each other as claimed by Appellant in independent claims 1 (Group C) and 24 (Group D). In fact,

Fordon teaches away from any type of releasable attachment of frames 9, 13. It is an object of Fordon's invention to have walls which swing outwardly to an inclined nesting position, and straps 22 provide the *non-releasable attachment* between frames 9 and 13 required to limit the outward movement of frames 9, 13 and create a stable nesting position so that Fordon's container can support an upper like container therein in a nested configuration (*see* Fordon, col. 2, lines 47-51; FIG. 6).

Furthermore, with respect to claim 24 (Group D), Fordon teaches away from the use of a releasable flange connection on frames 9 or 13 in place of non-releasable straps 22. First, a flange and its latch-type connection would not limit the outward swing of frames 9, 13 and therefore not provide any nesting capability for Fordon's containers. Even if a limited outward swing of frames 9, 13 were assumed, inwardly depending flanges provided on end frames 13 would prohibit nesting of Fordon's containers, as the end frames 13 of the upper container would no longer abut the end frames 13 of the lower container as shown in FIG. 6, but rather bottom frame 1 would likely abut the inwardly depending flanges such that an upper container could not be substantially received in a lower container in a nested configuration.

For all of the foregoing reasons, independent claims 1 (Group C) and 24 (Group D), along with their corresponding dependent claims, are patentably distinguishable over the combination of the Fordon and Overholt references. Because Group D recites a collapsible container where the first pair of opposed walls include a flange depending inwardly therefrom, which is not recited by the claims of Group C, the claims of Group D are patentable independently of the claims of Group C.

D. Rejection of Claim 15

Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Over Cloyd and Sanders

Claim 15 depends from and contains all the limitations of independent claim 14.

For the reasons described above in *Section B*, claim 14 is believed to be patentably

distinguishable over Cloyd, either alone or in combination with Sanders. Accordingly, claim 15 is patentably distinguishable over the cited combination.

E. Rejection of Claim 16

Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Over Cloyd, Sanders, and Fordon

Claim 16 depends from and contains all the limitations of independent claim 14.

For the reasons described above in *Section B*, claim 14 is believed to be patentably distinguishable over Cloyd, either alone or in combination with Sanders and Fordon. Accordingly, claim 16 is patentably distinguishable over the cited combination.

IX. SUMMARY

The Examiner's understanding and characterization of the references are submitted to be incorrect. The rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are in error. For the reasons discussed above, it is thus respectfully requested that these rejections be reversed.

The fee of **\$330.00** as applicable under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(c) is enclosed. Please charge any additional fee or credit any overpayment in connection with this filing to our Deposit Account No. 02-3978.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure - Appendix

X. APPENDIX - CLAIMS ON APPEAL

1. A container adapted to receive an inner receptacle, the container comprising:
a base for supporting a lower portion of the inner receptacle, the base including
a peripheral frame portion defining at least one relatively large opening therebetween;
a first pair of opposed walls pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion
and movable between an assembled position and an inwardly collapsed position;
a second pair of opposed walls pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion
and movable between an assembled position and an inwardly collapsed position, each of the
second pair of opposed walls releasably attached to an adjacent one of the first pair of opposed
walls, wherein the assembled first and second pairs of opposed walls and the base define a
compartment area which is arranged to removably receive the inner receptacle therein.
2. The container according to claim 1, wherein the peripheral frame portion
includes an inwardly extending flange for supporting the lower portion of the inner receptacle.
3. The container according to claim 1, further comprising a base member
extending across the relatively large opening.
4. The container according to claim 3, wherein the base member includes at
least one cross-member attached to the peripheral frame portion.
5. The container according to claim 3, wherein the base member includes an
exterior ring and a lightweight support material affixed thereacross, the exterior ring adapted
to be supported by an inwardly extending flange of the peripheral frame portion.

6. The container according to claim 1, wherein the first and second pairs of opposed walls include a plurality of relatively large apertures which represent a substantial portion of each of the first and second pairs of opposed walls.

7. The container according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the first and second pairs of opposed walls includes attachment members for securing the inner receptacle to the opposed walls.

8. The container according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the first and second pairs of opposed walls includes an integral handle.

9. The container according to claim 1, wherein one of the first and second pairs of opposed walls includes bail arms pivotably attached thereto.

12. The container according to claim 1, wherein one of the first and second pairs of opposed walls includes a guide projection and the other includes a guide receiver for aligning the first and second pairs of opposed walls in the assembled position.

13. The container according to claim 1, wherein one of the first and second pairs of opposed walls includes a latch and the other includes a latch receiver for securing the first and second pairs of opposed walls in the assembled position.

14. A container adapted to receive an inner receptacle arranged to hold merchandise therein, the container comprising:

a base including a peripheral frame portion;

a first pair of opposed walls integrally formed with and extending upwardly from the peripheral frame portion; and

a second pair of opposed walls integrally formed with and extending upwardly from the peripheral frame portion and integrally formed with the first pair of opposed walls, wherein the first and second pairs of opposed walls and the base define a compartment area for removably receiving and supporting the inner receptacle therein.

15. The container according to claim 14, wherein the first and second pairs of opposed walls include a plurality of relatively large apertures which represent a substantial portion of each of the first and second pairs of opposed walls.

16. The container according to claim 14, wherein at least one of the first and second pairs of opposed walls includes attachment members for securing the inner receptacle to the opposed walls.

18. A container adapted to receive an inner receptacle, comprising:

a base including a peripheral frame portion;

a base member adapted to be received on the peripheral frame portion for supporting a lower portion of the inner receptacle, the base member including an exterior ring and a lightweight support material affixed thereacross;

a first pair of opposed walls extending upwardly from the peripheral frame portion; and

a second pair of opposed walls extending upwardly from the peripheral frame portion and attached to the first pair of opposed walls, wherein the first and second pairs of opposed walls and the base define a compartment area for receiving the inner receptacle therein.

19. The container according to claim 18, wherein the exterior ring is adapted to be supported by an inwardly extending flange of the peripheral frame portion.

20. The container according to claim 18, wherein the exterior ring is releasably attached to the peripheral frame portion.

21. The container according to claim 18, wherein the first and second pairs of opposed walls include a plurality of relatively large apertures which represent a substantial portion of each of the first and second pairs of opposed walls.

22. The container according to claim 18, wherein at least one of the first and second pairs of opposed walls includes attachment members for securing the inner receptacle within the compartment area.

23. The container according to claim 18, wherein the first and second pairs of opposed walls are each pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion and releasably attached to each other, such that the first and second pairs of opposed walls are orientable between an assembled position and a collapsed position.

24. A collapsible container adapted to receive an inner receptacle, the container comprising:

a base for supporting a lower portion of the inner receptacle, the base having a peripheral frame portion defining at least one relatively large opening therebetween;

a first pair of opposed walls pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion and movable between an assembled position and an inwardly collapsed position, each of the first pair of opposed walls having a flange depending inwardly therefrom; and

a second pair of opposed walls pivotably attached to the peripheral frame portion and movable between an assembled position and an inwardly collapsed position, each of the second pair of opposed walls releasably attached to the flange of an adjacent one of the first pair of opposed walls in the assembled position, wherein orienting the first and second pairs

of opposed walls in the assembled position defines a compartment area which is arranged to removably receive the inner receptacle therein.

25. The container according to claim 24, wherein one of the first and second pairs of opposed walls includes a guide projection and the other includes a guide receiver for aligning the first and second pairs of opposed walls in the assembled position.

26. The container according to claim 24, wherein one of the first and second pairs of opposed walls includes a latch and the other includes a latch receiver for securing the first and second pairs of opposed walls in the assembled position.

27. The collapsible container according to claim 26, wherein the latch receiver is disposed within the flange depending inwardly from each of the first pair of opposed walls, the latch receiver having a latch aperture and a user actuable release portion, wherein the latch aperture is sized for slidably receiving the corresponding latch when the container is oriented in the assembled position, such that to release the container from the assembled position, the user actuable release portion is actuated by a user to release the latch from the latch aperture.

28. The collapsible container according to claim 24, wherein the peripheral frame portion includes an inwardly extending flange for supporting the lower portion of the inner receptacle.

29. The collapsible container according to claim 24, further comprising a base member extending across the relatively large opening.

30. The collapsible container according to claim 29, wherein the base member includes at least one cross-member attached to the peripheral frame portion.

31. The collapsible container according to claim 29, wherein the base member includes an exterior ring and a lightweight support material affixed thereacross; the exterior ring adapted to be supported by an inwardly extending flange of the peripheral frame portion.

32. The collapsible container according to claim 24, wherein at least one of the first and second pairs of opposed walls includes attachment members for securing the inner receptacle to the opposed walls.